

SOLVING HALF A DOZEN TEXTILE PROBLEMS BY ADVERTISING

The Nashua Manufacturing Company, whose selling headquarters are in Boston, has for many years made cotton blankets.

A few years ago it was generally accepted that no one would buy a high quality cotton blanket. This company, however, determined to sell one, and after several years of experiment, put on the market a cotton blanket which not only gave greater warmth and had a more durable nap, but also was strong and would not tear easily.

The business had been increasing steadily, but now the growth stopped. The improvement in quality was not impressed on consumers sufficiently to overcome the fact that they had to pay more to get this quality.

In the spring of 1912 it was decided to advertise.

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There were several distinct problems to be solved, among them the following:

A general prejudice against an all-cotton blanket had to be broken down.

The consumer needed to be convinced that the quality made it worth while to pay more than formerly.

The trade generally was demanding lower cost rather than higher quality.

Many of the jobbers at that time preferred to sell the goods under private brands rather than under the Nashua ticket.

The mill had little idea of the extent or location of the retail distribution, as it was obtained through indirect channels.

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It was determined that two fundamental things must be done.

FIRST, the blanket must be sold as a cotton blanket, not as part wool. This was difficult, because the name of the product was "Woolnap" (originally intended to describe the appearance and "feel" rather than the material).

SECOND, a sample must be distributed, in order to show the texture and appearance of the material.

A miniature doll-size blanket was decided upon as the sample and, as the expense was considerable, a price of 12c was put upon it.

The advertising began in the fall of 1912 and spring of 1913 principally in *The Ladies' Home Journal*. The doll blanket was featured.

That season 27,189 doll blankets were distributed.

The sale of the goods themselves, which had not increased at all the year before, INCREASED 16%. As that year, however, was a good one for all types of cotton blankets, too much credit should not be attributed to the first advertising.

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The next season the price of raw material went up. But because the advertising had already established a certain standard for Woolnap blankets, it was determined not to raise the price to the consumer. The price of the sample, however, was placed at 15c.

The advertising brought 26,778 inquiries. That year the general blanket trade was off and many competing lines showed losses. Woolnap sales INCREASED 12%.

During the 1914-1915 season, in spite of the European War, and a general falling off in cotton goods business, the advertising has been continued, and the sales of Woolnap blankets have INCREASED 14%.

The number of doll blankets distributed this season was 47,144. One advertisement alone, in *The Ladies' Home Journal*, produced 15,898 inquiries.

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The present large demand from the consumer has been reflected through the jobbers, who now generally approve of the Nashua Woolnap ticket and profit by handling the line in large volume at low cost of distribution.

And the interest of retailers is indicated by the fact that in one season alone hundreds of clippings have been received showing advertisements of Woolnap blankets, placed in newspapers and paid for by retail merchants.

This spring for the first time *The Saturday Evening Post* is being used with advertising directed not only at the consumer, but also at the retail merchant to prepare him for next fall's campaign.

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Advertising has made possible lower prices to the consumer.

The consumer is buying a more durable and satisfactory article than before and he is getting this higher quality at a lower price than would have been possible without advertising. This is due to the large volume and consequent lower cost of distribution.

Amory, Browne & Company, selling agents for the Nashua Manufacturing Company, say:

"The cost of advertising per pair has never exceeded 1c and has usually been considerably below it, this compared with an average retail price of something over \$2.00.

"Another very prominent result of advertising has been the increased pride in the manufacture taken by the mill, which has resulted in the goods being far more even in quality and more carefully made. There is no question but that the mill takes more pride in this product than in anything else and will do anything possible to improve it.

"It has resulted in our putting the size on the tickets and in making the blankets run exceptionally close to size, a difficult operation in blankets.

"It has had the further effect this year of our putting on the tickets in a conspicuous manner the words 'Pure Cotton' to prevent any unscrupulous person offering them as part wool."

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Advertising in this case has in three years brought these eight important results:

- (1) *Improved the quality of the goods.*
- (2) *Held down the price to the public.*
- (3) *Educated consumers who formerly bought only woolen or so-called woolen blankets to buy a high quality cotton blanket.*
- (4) *Increased the sales steadily — and during the past year in spite of a general decline in the textile industry, including blankets.*
- (5) *Distributed more than 90,000 samples, for which the purchasers paid from twelve to fifteen cents apiece.*
- (6) *Made misrepresentation impossible.*
- (7) *Showed the mill where its retail dealers are.*
- (8) *Established the mill trademark rather than private brands, and obtained the hearty support of jobbers for it.*

ALL AT AN ADVERTISING COST OF LESS THAN ONE-HALF OF ONE PER CENT. OF THE RETAIL PRICE.

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The story points its own moral to mills with similar problems.

THE CURTIS PUBLISHING COMPANY

INDEPENDENCE SQUARE, PHILADELPHIA

The Ladies' Home Journal

The Saturday Evening Post

The Country Gentleman